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NOVEMBER 20, 1958

10:13 PM

FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 364, NOVEMBER 20, 9 PM

SENT DEPARTMENT 364, BONN 316, MOSCOW 102, REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON, PARIS, POLAD USAREUR UNNUMBERED.

OURTEL SENT BONN 305 DEPT 352 COMMENTED RE POSSIBLE TIMETABLE RELATED TO KHRUSHCHEV INTENTIONS BERLIN. PROCEEDING ON ASSUMPTION SOVIETS UNILATERALLY ANNOUNCE END OF BERLIN FOUR POWER STATUS, GDR AUTHORITIES WILL PRESUMABLY CONSIDER ATTEMPTS SEAL OFF WEST BERLIN FROM EAST BERLIN AND SOVIET ZONE. IN SUCH CASE, FOLLOWING FACTORS LIKELY INFLUENCE THEIR JUDGMENT.

UNDOUBTEDLY MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR GDR IS CONTINUED LOSS OF POPULATION THROUGH REFUGEE FLOW WITH WEST BERLIN CHIEF ESCAPE ROUTE. EFFORTS REDUCE SUCH LOSS WOULD BE MOVES TOWARDS ISOLATION THEIR OWN PEOPLE FROM WEST SECTORS. CLOSELY ALLIED IS GDR DESIRE TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE EAST GERMAN CONTACTS WITH FREE GERMANS (E.G. RELATIVES, FRIENDS) IN WEST BERLIN. ASIDE FROM SUCH INTIMATE CONTACTS, EAST GERMAN POPULATION STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY ASPECTS WESTERN LIFE, LIVING STANDARDS, FREEDOMS OF WEST BERLIN WHICH PROVIDE SHARP CONTRAST WITH LIFE EAST GERMANY. NO DOUBT BOTH USSR AND GDR ALSO DESIRE LIMIT WESTERN INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION ACTIVITY AND WESTERN CAPACITY FOR OPERATIONAL PENETRATION SOVIET ZONE INHERENT IN WEST BERLIN POSITION. PERENNIAL BORDER CROSSER PROBLEM ILLUSTRATES ANOTHER FACTOR: DRAIN OF 35 TO 40 THOUSAND EAST WORKERS WHO DAILY COMMUTE TO WORK IN WEST AND CONTINUE REJECT ENTICEMENTS TO WORK IN EAST. IN ADDITION TO LABOR LOSS, THERE ALSO ATTENDANT SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR GDR IN SUCH MOVEMENT.

ON OTHER HAND, OTHER FACTORS EXIST WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED BY GDR

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-2- 364, NOVEMBER 20, 9 PM FROM BERLIN

GDR TO MILITATE AGAINST HARSH MOVES TO SEAL OFF WEST BERLIN. GDR "NORMALIZATION", HEAVILY STRESSED LAST FEW MONTHS, INTER ALIA SEEKS LESSEN WEST BERLIN TIES WITH FEDREP WHILE INCREASING TIES WITH EAST BERLIN AND SOVIET UNION. EXAMPLE IS RECENT EBERT OFFER NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH WEST BERLIN SENAT TO PROVIDE WEST BERLIN WITH CERTAIN FOODSTUFFS, AWARD EAST CONTRACTS TO WEST BERLIN FACTORIES, GIVE EMPLOYMENT IN EAST TO 10 THOUSAND WEST BERLIN WORKERS, AND ESTABLISH JOINT COMMISSION FOR REGULATING BORDER CROSSERS PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH PRESENT SITUATION ADMITTEDLY UNNATURAL, TIGHT SEAL-OFF WEST BERLIN MIGHT WELL COUNTER EAST OBJECTIVES THIS REGARD AND CERTAINLY WOULD REDUCE CHANCES OF SUCCESS THEIR EFFORTS EXERT INCREASING MAGNETIC PULL ON WEST BERLIN.

SEAL-OFF WOULD ALSO RUN COUNTER TO CURRENT GDR EFFORTS INCREASE UTILITY EAST BERLIN AS "SHOW PLACE" AND SERIOUSLY LIMIT THEIR DRIVE TO SELL INTERNATIONALLY THEIR CONCEPT OF "BERLIN" AS CAPITAL GDR. THIS FACTOR IS CLOSELY RELATED TO GDR DRIVE FOR DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION AS COUNTRY HAVING REQUIRED DEGREE OF RESPECTABILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY. GDR LEADERS MUST ALSO CONSIDER PROBABILITY THAT SUDDEN MOVES TO SEAL OFF WEST SECTORS WOULD MATERIALLY STRENGTHEN MORAL POSITION WESTERN POWERS AGAINST GDR AND SIMULTANEOUSLY REDUCE GDR PENETRATION ACTIVITIES WEST BERLIN.

WHETHER, AS MAYOR AMREHN RECENTLY TOLD MISSION OFFICER, GDR LEADERS CONSIDER SOME REFUGEE FLOW DESIRABLE AS "SAFETY VALVE" FOR EAST GERMAN MALCONTENTS REMAINS A MOOT QUESTION; IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE "SAFETY VALVE" HAS LESS VALIDITY NOW THAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

WITH SED PARTICIPATING IN WEST BERLIN ELECTIONS EAST GERMANS HAVE NATURALLY GIVEN NO INDICATION OF THEIR EVENTUAL POLICY. AFTER DEC 7 ELECTIONS THEIR INTENTIONS MAY BE CLARIFIED.

ON BALANCE, WE INCLINED ANTICIPATE GDR WILL MOVE PROGRESSIVELY TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS IN ORDER REDUCE EAST GERMAN ACCESS WEST SECTORS BUT NOT LIKELY ATTEMPT SUDDEN SEAL-OFF WEST BERLIN PER SE.

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